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Ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Using data from the 2002–2003 Netherlands Kinship Panel Study and the Social Position and Provisions Ethnic Minorities Survey ($N = 2833$) we describe patterns of intergenerational solidarity among five different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. We compare patterns of normative, associational and functional solidarity between various immigrant groups and the native Dutch, and question how and to what extent behavior is determined by filial norms, socio-demographic position or ethnic background. Results show that immigrant adult children show higher levels of normative (filial obligations) and associational (contact) solidarity. Functional solidarity (providing support) shows a more complex pattern. Immigrants are no more likely to provide counsel or advice than the Dutch but immigrant women are more likely to provide practical support than Dutch women.

Introduction

Intergenerational support from adult children to parents is an important aspect of the intergenerational solidarity framework as developed by Bengtson and Roberts (1991), and many studies have applied this framework in order to understand relationships between adult children and their elderly parents (Mancini & Blieszner, 1989; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). Intergenerational solidarity is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct including affectual, associational, consensual, normative, functional and structural solidarity.

Although the framework is presented as a general model, few studies compare various ethnic groups on multiple intergenerational solidarity dimensions simultaneously, and little is known therefore about how ethnic groups might differ in patterns of intergenerational solidarity over the different dimensions. Such differences are becoming of importance though, now that an increasing per centage of the population in western societies belongs to a minority group and minority groups themselves are ageing as well. In general, elderly minorities are disproportionately more likely to be poor, to have poorer health, and to experience more functional limitation, yet they are less likely to rely on institutions for long-term care (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Previous research suggests that minority elders are partially sheltered from the worst outcomes of these risks because they are immersed in strong family support networks based on cultural norms of filial obligations (Choi, 1999; Clark & Huttlinger, 1998; Hayes & Mindel, 1973). More recent studies, however, show that differences between minority and majority groups with respect to the actual exchanges of aid and services between family members may not be as large as previously assumed due to structural constraints minorities face (Eggebeen, 1992; Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Kelly Raley, 1995).

In the present study, we aim to compare five different ethnic groups of adult children on three dimensions of the intergenerational solidarity framework. Although it would be preferable to use all dimensions of the intergenerational solidarity framework, our data does not provide measurements for all of the dimensions. Nevertheless, we argue that using three dimensions while comparing five ethnic groups is a step forward in the study of ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity. We define the three dimensions as follows. Normative solidarity is defined as the obligations adult children feel towards their parents Associational

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solidarity is conceived as the frequency of contact between adult children and their parents and functional solidarity is defined as the degree of assistance provided by adult children to their parents.

In addition to the separate analyses of the above mentioned dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, we will investigate the association between the normative and behavioral aspects of intergenerational solidarity. In other words, we will use norms of filial obligations as an indicator of cultural differences and aim to show how ethnic background and cultural norms are associated with behavioral solidarity while controlling for structural characteristics. Our study focuses on the Netherlands and includes adult children with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean as well as a native Dutch background.

Immigrants in the Netherlands

The Dutch population consists of around 16.3 million people. Of the non-western population, the four largest groups are the Turks (351 648), the Surinamese (325 281), the Moroccans (306 219) and the Antilleans (130 722). Together, these four groups make up around 7% of the Dutch population, although due to spatial concentration they make up much larger per centages of the major cities in the Netherlands (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

These largest immigrant groups have different migration histories. The Turks and Moroccans started coming to the Netherlands from the 1960s onwards as guest workers, to fill labour shortages occurring in the Netherlands at that time. They were mostly unskilled male labourers who arrived without their family and who did not speak the Dutch language. Although initially both the Dutch government and the guest workers themselves envisioned the migration as temporary, it soon became clear that many migrants would stay in the Netherlands and since then the process of family reunification got started.

Suriname and the Dutch Antilles were former Dutch colonies and immigrants from these countries have very diverse backgrounds. Especially the first waves of immigrants were often students and highly educated people, who held Dutch citizenship. Many immigrants convinced their families to come to the Netherlands as well. More recently, lower educated immigrants, especially from the Antilles, migrated to the Netherlands in search of better lives. In general, due to the colonial ties with the Netherlands immigrants from these countries speak the Dutch language well and are considered to be more culturally similar to the Dutch than the Turks and Moroccans (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Turkish and Moroccan societies are traditionally predominantly Islamic, patrilineally organized and gender segregated. Family is important and strong interdependent relations between family members exist that are prescribed by social norms. On the other hand, the 'Caribbean family system' is often described as matrifocal, with a relative absence of cultural norms promoting marriage and the tolerance for non-marital childbearing. It is not unusual for households to be headed by women with male partners who are not, or only occasionally, present.

While there were 90 000 elderly (55+) non-western immigrants in the Netherlands in the year 2000 (CBS 2004, 2007), the Dutch *Social and Cultural Planning bureau* (SCP) expects this number to grow to 230 000 in 2015. Unlike in the United States, where a considerable proportion of immigrants arrived when already in old age (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002), in the Netherlands most elderly immigrants arrived at a much younger age and have aged in the Netherlands. Many of them expected to return to their country of origin after retirement, but recently it became clear that for many of them this is not a feasible option anymore due to ties with children and grandchildren in the Netherlands and the lack of facilities such as good hospitals, in the country of origin.

The elderly immigrant population appears to experience increased vulnerability with age, compared with their Dutch counterparts. For example, especially older Turkish and Moroccan immigrants are disproportionately more likely than older Dutch persons to be poor, to have health problems, and to experience functional limitation (Schellingerhout, 2004a,b).

Although large quantitative studies comparing ethnic minorities on family support are lacking in the Netherlands, small-scale qualitative studies on elderly care and informal support provided by ethnic minority families show that elderly immigrants in the Netherlands originate from societies where family ties are important, not only from an emotional perspective but also for individual survival (Abraham, 1996; van Niekerk, 1991; Yerden, 2000). These studies, however, use small non-representative samples, and rely on data from minority groups only, therefore not providing a framework to compare these with the Dutch natives. It is assumed, though, that in the societies from which the immigrants in the Netherlands originate, people depend on their families in times of crisis and strong norms prevail that family members should support each other in such events. Having children is often considered as insurance for old age by parents, and cultural and religious norms underscore children's duty to assist their parents (Kagitçibasi, 1996; Nauck, 2007).

Theory and hypotheses

Cultural values

Some empirical evidence exists that minorities have strong norms of family obligations. Burr and Mutchler (1999) found that Hispanic immigrants have stronger preferences for filial obligations (normative solidarity) than non-Hispanic White Americans; similarly, Lee, Peek, and Coward (1998) found that Blacks in the United States possess a stronger sense of filial responsibility than do Whites. In the Netherlands, de Valk and Schans (2008) found that elderly parents with an immigrant background have higher expectations of their adult children regarding filial obligations than do native Dutch elderly. It can be assumed that many elderly immigrants in the Netherlands were socialized in kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a prerequisite for a family's material wellbeing. It is unclear, though, what happens to the norms and behavior related to assisting elderly parents after immigration of adult children to an advanced welfare state like the Netherlands, where different norms prevail and where the welfare state offers an alternative form of support. Nevertheless, it is likely

that parents will have tried to socialize their children into having the same preferences for high levels of filial obligations as they have themselves. Socialization theory assumes that parents transmit their norms and values to their children by means of instruction, confirmation and role modeling (Bandura, 1977). In addition, the literature on the role of ethnic orientation in the lives of immigrants suggests that immigrants orient themselves to the culture and customs of their country of origin, because these offer a sense of security and identity in the new environment that immigrants are faced with in the host country. Parents transmit these cultural orientations to their children who in turn are likely to internalize them (de Valk, 2006; Vollebergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers, 2001).

We therefore hypothesize that adult children with an immigrant background will have stronger preferences for filial obligations than do native Dutch adult children (H1). Moreover, cultural norms and values can be seen as orienting people's behavior (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Klein Ikkink, Van Tilburg, & Knipscheer, 1999; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Therefore, although we cannot establish a causal link with our cross-sectional data, we assume that immigrant children will have more contact with (H2), and provide more support to their parents (H3). Since we expect that part of these ethnic differences in behavior can be attributed to differences in cultural values, we hypothesize that controlling for filial responsibilities will show a decrease in ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity behavior (H4).

Structural constraints and opportunities

Some North-American studies point to the fact that interethnic differences in intergenerational ties are not so much due to cultural differences but rather the result of differences in demographic characteristics and socio-economic resources. In other words, there are differences in constraints and opportunities between natives and immigrants (Glick & Van Hook, 2002; Mitchell, Wister, & Gee, 2004; Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2006). Empirical results from this structural framework on familial support are mixed. Traditionally, it was claimed that families from lower social economic classes not only have more traditional attitudes towards family values, but also maintain higher levels of family support in order to make ends meet (Mutran, 1985). From this perspective, ethnic minorities rely more on family support precisely because of their lower socio-economic backgrounds (Stack, 1974; Scott & Black, 1999). Recently, however, it has been argued that this approach romanticizes 'poor' families, even glorifying the survival strategies of the poor, while several studies found that resource constraints actually prevent minority groups from participating in family networks (Eggebeen, 1992; Lee & Aytac, 1998; Roschelle, 1997). From this perspective, educational accomplishments and economic resources are characteristics that can facilitate, and actually increase the likelihood of support (Hogan et al., 1993; Silverstein & Waite, 1993). Kulis (1992), for example, found no support for the typically presumed patterns of support in different social classes — hands on services among the working class, and financial support among the middle class — in his large-scale survey. Middle-class families offered more instrumental, social and economic assistance than did working-class families.

We assume that ethnic differences in different domains of intergenerational support can be partly explained by differences in socio-economic resources. We assume that higher levels of education result in weaker preferences for filial obligations. The underlying assumption is that those with higher education have a different value orientation toward family issues, based on the frequently made claim that the more highly educated are more individualistic in their outlook: they would be more strongly oriented to individual autonomy, less likely to follow conventional norms, and more likely to use a rational rather than a normative line of reasoning about their relationships (Inglehart, 1997; Kalmijn, 2006). Since the general level of education is much lower for immigrants, especially for Turks and Moroccans, than for native Dutch, we hypothesize that controlling for educational level will show a decrease in ethnic differences in filial responsibilities (H5).

At the same time, we assume that higher levels of education and socio-economic resources can facilitate behavioral solidarity. In terms of ethnic differences, this would mean that controlling for the lower educational level and socio-economic resources of immigrants will increase ethnic differences in solidary behavior (H6).

Gender

Research results within family sociology show the significance of several characteristics of the family structure for family ties. One important independent variable in explaining variation in intergenerational relations, for example, is gender. A great deal of attention has been paid to the centrality of women in kinkeeping. A discussion on whether this has to do with biological differences, cultural socialization or structural differences between men and women is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is well known that daughters are more likely than sons to be in close contact with, and provide support to, their parents. Women are found to have less traditional attitudes than men where family obligations are concerned but they are nevertheless more likely to provide different kinds of support to family members than men (Gerstel & Gallagher, 2001; Komter & Vollebergh, 2002; Roschelle, 1997; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004b).

Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a) draw attention to the fact that gender is also crucial for understanding ethnic and racial differences in kin support. Whereas Black men are very similar to White men in their support behavior, Black women are more likely than White women to be involved in exchanges of practical help, but less likely to be involved in balanced exchanges of emotional support. Therefore, we will include interaction terms of gender and ethnic background in our models. Our assumption is that women in all ethnic groups agree less with norms of filial responsibility (H7), yet are more involved in the behavioral aspects of intergenerational solidarity (H8).

Control variables

Previous studies (Hogan et al., 1993; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006) have shown that several demographic characteristics of the adult child and the parent as well as of the dyad affect intergenerational solidarity. We

will include the following demographic characteristics of the adult child and the parent as control variables in our models: *marital status*, *number of children*, *age of the respondent*, and *age of the parent and gender of the parent*. To account for characteristics of the dyad that other studies have shown to be of importance we include *quality of the relationship*, and *geographical proximity* in the final step of our models.

Data and method

This study is based on data from three related surveys designed to study family relations and to facilitate comparisons between ethnic minority and Dutch families. These data provide a unique opportunity to compare patterns in intergenerational support between different ethnic groups in the Netherlands.

The first dataset is the sample of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study. The NKPS main sample is a random sample of individuals living in private households in the Netherlands (aged 18–79). Potential respondents were approached either by phone or in person and computer-assisted personal interviews were supplemented with a self-administered questionnaire. The NKPS main sample was supplemented with an immigrant sample, drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which half the immigrants from the four largest immigrant groups live. This resulted in additional data on immigrants of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin. For full details on the NKPS and the sampling frame we refer to the NKPS codebook (Dykstra et al., 2004).

Along with the NKPS immigrant sample, another survey was conducted in cooperation with the NKPS at the same time. This survey, *Sociale Positie en Voorzieningengebruik Allochtonen* (Social Position and Use of Provisions by Immigrants), furthermore includes highly comparable data on 4199 heads of households from the same 13 cities and the same ethnic backgrounds (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). The immigrant respondents in both surveys were approached at home by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. The interview followed a structured, paper and pencil questionnaire that was available in Turkish, Arabic and Dutch.

After a non-response follow-up the NKPS yielded an overall response rate of 45% for the main sample respondents. In general the response rates in the Netherlands are low as compared to the US, but this response rate is comparable to that of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands (De Leeuw & De Heer, 2001). The response rate among immigrants is comparable to that of the Dutch, ranging from 41% among the Surinamese to 52% among Turks (Groeneveld & Weijers-Martens, 2003). Combining the NKPS main and immigrant sample (only respondents from the same 13 cities as where the immigrant surveys were conducted were included) and the SPVA sample, we created a dataset of 6970 respondents. We excluded the respondents for whom neither biological parent was alive ($n=1700$). We also excluded the respondents whose parents lived in the country of origin ($n=2339$) since, especially where the behavioral component of intergenerational ties is concerned, comparisons including these parent–child dyads are not within the topic of this paper. To make sure that we would not select respondents on the dependent variable of filial responsibility, we conducted separate analyses (not reported) to see whether respondents whose parents lived abroad differ on this variable from respondents whose parents live in the Netherlands. Our findings show this was not the case. Furthermore, respondents with parents living abroad were almost equally divided over the four immigrant groups.

Finally, we excluded the data on adult children living with their parents ($n=65$) for various reasons. First, sharing a household with a parent may involve helping of a different quality and quantity relative to the provision of care by adult children who do not live with their parents. Therefore, co-residers may measure and report help differently from those who do not co-reside (Hogan et al., 1993; Laditka & Laditka, 2001). Second, there were only a very small number of respondents who shared a home with their parents ($n=65$). Our final sample consists of 2833 respondents (420 Turkish, 411 Moroccans, 647 Surinamese, 383 Antilleans, and 972 Dutch). Each respondent was asked questions about one of their parents. In case both parents were still alive, one parent was randomly selected.

Measures

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations of both dependent and independent variables used in the analyses, both separately by ethnic group category and totaled across categories. The correlation matrix of the independent variables does not reveal problems of multicollinearity.

Dependent variables

Normative solidarity

Filial obligations refer to the expectations of adult children to provide support for their ageing parents. Our scale consists of three items on the importance of intergenerational support. Items that are included are: “Children should take care of their parents when they are sick”; “Parents should live with their children when they get old”; “Children who live close by should visit their parents at least once a week.” The items are phrased in universal rather than in particular terms in order to measure cultural norms rather than personal norms. Answering categories on a 5-point Likert scale range from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree (after recoding). The overall reliability of the scale is $\alpha=.72$. Among separate ethnic groups this scale also shows good reliability (lowest for Turks $\alpha=.59$ and highest for Antilleans and Dutch $\alpha=.73$).

Associational solidarity

Respondents were asked how often they met their parent in person in the last year and how often they had contact with their parent by (e-)mail or phone in the previous year. Response categories ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (daily). For the explanatory analyses, these are recoded into a numeric scale indicating the approximate number of times parents and children had been in touch in the past 12 months (0–365).

Functional solidarity

We use two items that relate to practical help provided to parents in the past 3 months The first item indicates whether the respondent provided practical support to his parent, like

Table 1
Description of dependent and independent variables by ethnic group (mean and SD).
NKPS and SPVA 2002/2003.

	Range	Turks ($n=420$)	Moroccans ($n=410$)	Surinamese ($n=647$)	Antilleans ($n=383$)	Dutch ($n=972$)	Total ($n=2.833$)
Structural and demographic characteristics							
Gender (1 = female)	0/1	.35	.41	.51	.52	.50	.46
Age		31.98 (7.25)	30.73 (7.02)	36.30 (9.06)	34.14 (9.24)	38.15 (10.54)	35.00 (9.46)
Education (years)	6–16	9.89 (3.33)	10.02 (3.55)	11.39 (3.09)	12.17 (3.36)	13.58 (2.71)	11.70 (3.46)
Household income (1000 Euros)	0–6	1.68 (0.87)	1.60 (0.88)	1.83 (1.09)	1.74 (1.08)	2.66 (4.61)	2.01 (2.73)
Married (1 = married)	0/1	.78	.67	.32	.19	.40	.46
Having child(ren) (1 = child)	0/1	.70	.58	.61	.44	.38	.53
Characteristics of the dyad							
Quality of relationship	1/4	3.46 (0.78)	3.59 (0.63)	3.10 (0.88)	3.15 (1.00)	3.13 (1.02)	3.39 (0.89)
Geographical proximity (1 = same municipality)	0/1	.85	.85	.61	.47	.34	.57
Parent's characteristics							
Gender (1 = mother)	0/1	.51	.50	.68	.63	.62	.60
Age		59.22 (8.48)	59.10 (8.26)	63.28 (11.20)	62.37 (11.10)	66.81 (11.76)	62.98 (11.00)
Dependent variables							
Filial obligations	1–5	3.81 (0.68)	4.11 (0.65)	3.42 (0.84)	3.25 (0.86)	2.97 (0.75)	3.43 (0.86)
Functional solidarity (1 = yes on at least 1 item)	0/1	.61	.67	.68	.64	.61	.65
Associational solidarity	0–365	185 (126)	160 (109)	126 (121)	127 (127)	64 (74)	118 (116)

for example helping with chores in and around the house, lending things or providing transportation, while the second item asks whether the respondent has given counsel or advice to his/her parent. Response categories vary from (1) not at all, (2) once or twice and (3) several times. For the analysis, answers are recoded into 0 (no) and 1 (yes). Although we summed the items originally to provide one overall score of functional solidarity (Table 1), preliminary analysis showed that explanatory patterns differed between practical support and giving counsel or advice. Therefore, in Tables 4 and 5 we show results for both items separately.

Independent and control variables

Ethnic background

The ethnic background of the respondents (adult children) is defined according to his/her country of birth and that of their parents. Respondents born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad were assigned to one of the four ethnic minority groups. For each group, a separate dummy variable was created to compare them to the Dutch.

Education

The educational level of the respondent is the indicated highest level enrolled in (either with or without a certificate). Among immigrants, the educational enrolment can have been in the country of origin or in the Netherlands. For the regression analyses, the original detailed categories were recoded into the approximate number of years of schooling required for completing the level.

Income

Respondents were asked to indicate their own net monthly income (from work or social benefits). This information was combined with the partners' income in order to calculate the total net household income per month. Missing values (19% of total sample) are replaced by the mean of the ethnic group. A separate dummy variable indicating when answers to the income question were missing was included in the analyses to check for differences. No dissimilarity was found between those who did and did not report their income.

Gender

A dichotomous variable was included indicating if the child was male (0) or female (1).

Filial obligations

The above mentioned items on filial obligations were entered as an independent variable in the models explaining solidary behavior.

Age

The child's age in years as reported at the time of the interview is included as a continuous variable. Preliminary analyses (not reported) also included age squared to check for potential curvilinear relations between age and dependent variables, but no significant results were found.

Marital status

Respondents who are married at the time of the interview are compared with those who have a different marital status (divorced, widowed or never married). The latter are the reference group in the analyses.

Number of children

Respondents were asked for the total number of (biological or adopted) children they have had in their life. We compare those who have children with those who do not (reference category).

Age of the parent

The parent's age in years as reported at the time of the interview is included as a continuous variable.

Gender of the parent

We created a dichotomous variable indicating if the parent was male (0) or female (1).

Relationship quality of parent and child

The parent–child relationship quality was determined based on a 4-point Likert scale from (1) not so good to (4) very good. Missing values (21% of total sample) are replaced by the mean of the ethnic group. A separate dummy variable indicating when answers were missing on the variable of relationship quality was included in the analyses to check for differences. No dissimilarity was found between those who did and did not report the quality of their relation with their parent.

Geographical proximity

A dichotomous variable was constructed indicating whether or not the parent lives in the same municipality as the adult child.

Method

To test our hypothesis concerning levels of filial obligations, several OLS regression models of increasing complexity were estimated. Because of the complex relation among the variables, in addition to the full models including all variables simultaneously, we also estimated additional partial models in which the groups of independent variables were introduced separately. In the first model, only ethnic background was incorporated. In the subsequent models structural and demographic variables were entered. In the full model we incorporated all independent and control variables.

Next, we estimated similar OLS regression models to analyse ethnic differences in the frequency of contact between parent and child. The models follow the same logic as in the previous table, only now filial obligations were included as an independent variable, to test if higher levels of filial obligations are associated with having more frequent contact.

Finally, we turn to support. Since our response variable is dichotomous, we use logistic regression models. Moreover, we analyse both items (*practical support* and *giving counsel or advice*) separately since preliminary analyses indicated that practical help and giving advice show different patterns for different ethnic groups. In addition, since Sarkisian and Gerstel (2004a) demonstrated that interactions exist between ethnicity and gender when comparing behavioral support between ethnic groups, we performed preliminary analyses separately by gender. Results indicated that when practical support is considered, ethnic comparisons differ by gender but giving advice does not. Therefore, we present our results on practical support separately for men and women, but when turning to advice we again present joint results.

Results

Bivariate results

Normative solidarity

Descriptive results (not shown) indicate large differences in preferences for filial obligation between ethnic groups. The majority of the Turks and Moroccans (strongly) agree with all of the items measuring filial obligations against approximately half of the Surinamese and Antilleans, and a minority of the native Dutch. For example, 84% of the Turkish and 90% of the Moroccan respondents agree with the statement that children should take care of their parents when they are sick, against 66% and 58% of the Surinamese and Antillean respondents, and only 40% of the Dutch. 87% of the Turks and Moroccans feel that children who live close by should visit their parents at least once a week, while only 38% of the Dutch agree with this statement. The Surinamese and Antilleans hold a middle position.

Results from Table 2 [model 1], with just a constant and ethnic group status, confirm our hypothesis that all immigrant groups are significantly more likely than the Dutch to prefer high levels of filial obligations from adult children to parents (H1). Fisher (1966) least significant difference (LSD) *post hoc* test (not shown) shows that the opinions of the Turks and Moroccans differed significantly from the other three groups but not from each other. The Surinamese and Antillean did not differ from each other but their opinion differed from all other groups.

Associational solidarity

Results show that all immigrant groups have significantly more contact with their parents than the Dutch group. Turkish adult children report the most frequent contact with their parents ($M=185$) followed by the Moroccans ($M=160$), the Surinamese and Antilleans ($M=126/127$) and the Dutch ($M=64$). Table 3 [model 1] shows that all the immigrant groups differ significantly from the Dutch, which confirms our hypothesis that immigrant adult children in the Netherlands have more extensive contact with their parents than their Dutch counterparts (H2). Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) *post hoc* test (Fisher, 1966; not shown) indicates that all group means differ significantly ($p<.05$)

Table 2
Unstandardized coefficients for OLS regression analyses of attitudes towards filial obligation ($n=2.833$).

	Model 1	Model 2
	B (SE)	B (SE)
Ethnicity		
Dutch (reference category)		
Turkish	.87 (.05)***	.50 (.05)***
Moroccan	1.15 (.05)***	.80 (.05)***
Surinamese	.48 (.04)***	.26 (.04)***
Antillean	.32 (.05)***	.14 (.05)**
Structural an demographic characteristics		
Female		−.13 (.03)***
Age (in years)		−.01 (.01)
Education (in years)		−.05 (.01)***
Married (unmarried)		−.07 (.04)
Having child(ren) (no child)		.05 (.04)
Household income (1000 Euros)		.00 (.01)
Characteristics of the dyad		
Quality of relationship		.23 (.02)***
Geographical proximity		.14 (.04)**
Intercept	2.95 (.03)***	3.20 (.22)***
R2	.22	.31

Note: variables filial obligations and quality of family ties range is 1 = *low* to 5 = *high*.
*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.

from each other, except for the Surinamese and the Antillean groups.

Functional solidarity

When we sum up the items on having provided practical support or given counsel or advice, we do not find large ethnic differences (Table 1). Overall, 65% of respondents indicated having provided such support at least once in the last 3 months. The Moroccans and Surinamese are most likely to have been involved in providing support or advice (68 and 67%) while the Turks report the lowest score (61%). At the bivariate level, our hypothesis that immigrant groups would provide more support than the Dutch is not confirmed (H3).

Multivariate results

To determine if differences in attitudes and behavior between the ethnic groups remain significant after we introduce our explanatory variables, we estimated several regression models introducing different groups of independent variables. The results of the full OLS regression models are presented in Tables 2–5.

As we expected, the higher educated were less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for elderly parents compared to those with lower levels of education. Controlling for educational level indeed decreases the ethnic differences coefficients (H5), illustrating that part of the ethnic differences in attitudes towards filial obligations can be explained by the lower educational level of immigrants. Nevertheless, coefficients remain significant for all immigrant groups compared to the Dutch, even when we introduce all independent variables (Table 2 [model 2]).

From theories on cultural values, we hypothesized that part of the ethnic differences in solidary behavior stem from differences in levels of filial responsibilities (H4). Our results show filial responsibility is highly correlated with associational solidarity. Controlling for levels of filial responsibility also decreases the differences between the Dutch and immigrant groups where level of contact with parents is concerned, although differences remain significant.

Table 4 shows the ethnic differences in the likelihood of provision of practical support by adult children to parents.

The analyses are shown separately by gender. Coefficients appear as odds ratios, with odds ratios greater than 1 indicating positive effects, and odds ratios smaller than 1 indicating negative effects. Women in the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese group are much more likely to provide practical support to their parents than their Dutch counterparts. However, this pattern does not show for men. Immigrant men are just as (un)likely to provide support to their parents as are Dutch men [model 2].

Table 5 shows whether ethnic differences in the likelihood of provision of counsel and advice by adult children to parents exist. Patterns for men and women were similar and therefore the combined model is shown.

Model 1 indicates that only Turks differ from the native Dutch in the likelihood of providing counsel or advice to their parents, and they are less likely to provide such support. The coefficient for the Moroccans — though not significant— is negative as well. Tables 4 and 5 show that filial responsibilities are also associated with higher levels of practical support (both for men and women) and with providing counsel or advice but no interactions with ethnicity were found.

From the structural framework, alternative hypotheses were formulated for the effect of socio-economic resources on intergenerational support. We expected that higher levels of education and income would provide people with the resources to stay in contact and to provide help. Taking into account the lower resources immigrants in general have, we hypothesized that controlling for these resources would increase ethnic differences in contact and support (H6). To test these hypotheses several regression models were estimated and the full models are shown in Tables 3–5 [model 2]. Contrary to results from previous studies in the United States, income does not have any significant effect in our models, except that people with higher incomes are slightly more likely to provide counsel or advice to their parents. Contrary to our expectations, higher levels of education lead to less contact, and controlling for educational level does not increase ethnic differences in the amount of contact children have with their parents. Results from Table 4 show that education has a positive effect on providing support; however, this is only the case for men. Controlling for level of education, immigrant men become slightly more likely to provide support than their Dutch counterparts, but only in the case of Moroccan men this difference becomes significant. Level of education has no effect on the likelihood of women to provide support to their parents.

Nevertheless, as we expected (H7), women agree less with filial responsibility attitudes than do men (Table 2 [model 2]). Separate interactions (not shown) indicate that

Table 3
Unstandardized coefficients for OLS regression analyses of frequency of contact ($n = 2.833$).

	Model 1	Model 2
	B (SE)	B (SE)
Ethnicity		
Dutch (reference category)		
Turkish	118.29 (9.76)***	53.69 (9.83)***
Moroccan	114.88 (11.19)***	38.65 (11.03)***
Surinamese	54.73 (8.22)***	25.45 (7.54)**
Antillean	60.21 (8.93)***	41.41 (7.91)***
Structural and demographic characteristics		
Female		26.26 (4.61)***
Age (in years)		−.61 (.46)
Education (in years)		−2.26 (.83)**
Married (unmarried)		−4.47 (5.48)
Having child(ren) (no child)		16.53 (4.96)**
Household income (1000 Euros)		−.78 (.61)
Age parent		.09 (.39)
Gender parent		21.26 (4.83)***
Characteristics of the dyad		
Quality of relationship		33.95 (2.59)***
Geographical proximity		46.80 (5.17)***
Filial obligations		12.89 (2.94)***
Intercept		
R2	.17	.39

Note: variables filial obligations and quality of family ties range is 1 = *low* to 5 = *high*.
*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.

Table 4
Logistic regression model for providing practical help to parent ($n = 2.833$).

	Men ($n = 1.354$)				Women ($n = 1.479$)			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	B (SE)	Odds ratio	B (SE)	Odds ratio	B (SE)	Odds ratio	B (SE)	Odds ratio
Ethnicity								
Dutch (reference category)								
Turkish	−.16 (.18)	.85	−.41 (.24)	.67	1.02 (.22)	2.76***	1.11 (.26)	3.05***
Moroccan	.41 (.21)	1.50*	.13 (.26)	1.14	1.14 (.21)	3.14***	1.05 (.26)	2.86***
Surinamese	.15 (.18)	1.16	.05 (.20)	1.05	.84 (.15)	2.31***	.78 (.18)	2.19***
Antillean	.03 (.21)	1.03	−.02 (.22)	.98	.34 (.17)	1.40*	.25 (.20)	1.28
Structural and demographic characteristics								
Age			−.02 (.05)	.98			−.08 (.04)	.92
Education (years)			.07 (.02)	1.07**			.03 (.02)	1.03
Married			.08 (.18)	1.08			−.08 (.16)	.92
Having child(ren)			.01 (.18)	1.00			.03 (.15)	1.03
Household income (1000 Euros)			.01 (.02)	1.01			.06 (.05)	1.07
Parent's characteristics								
Mother (father)			.43 (.14)	1.54**			.89 (.13)	2.44***
Age			.02 (.01)	1.02			.03 (.01)	1.03**
Characteristics of the dyad								
Quality of relationship			.37 (.09)	1.45***			.40 (.08)	1.50***
Geographical proximity			.52 (.11)	1.67***			.55 (.15)	1.74***
Filial obligations			.26 (.09)	1.29**			.21 (.08)	1.23*
−2 Log likelihood	1416.8		1354.0		1659.7		1560.8	

Note: independent variables quality of family ties and filial obligations range is 1 = *low* to 5 = *high*. *$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.

only in the Moroccan case opinions between men and women did not differ. We expected that women would still be more involved in the behavioral aspects of solidarity than men (H8). Indeed, women in all ethnic groups are more likely to have higher levels of contact with their parents then men. However, immigrant women are more likely to provide support to their parents than Dutch women. Only in the case of Antillean women this difference becomes insignificant when all control variables are added. Women in all ethnic groups are more likely to provide counsel or advice to their parents than men.

Table 5
Logistic regression model for providing counsel or advise to parent ($n = 2.833$).

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B (SE)	Odds ratio	B (SE)	Odds ratio
Ethnicity				
Dutch (reference category)				
Turkish	−.35 (.14)	.70*	−.09 (.18)	.91
Moroccan	−.17 (.14)	.84	−.02 (.19)	.98
Surinamese	.10 (.12)	1.10	.17 (.14)	1.18
Antillean	.06 (.14)	1.07	.14 (.16)	1.15
Structural and demographic characteristics				
Gender			.30 (.10)	1.35**
Age			−.01 (.03)	.99
Education (years)			.10 (.02)	1.10***
Married			−.05 (.12)	.95
Having child(ren)			−.12 (.12)	.89
Household income (1000 Euros)			.09 (.04)	1.10*
Parent's characteristics				
Mother			.69 (.10)	1.99***
Age			.02 (.01)	1.02*
Characteristics of the dyad				
Quality of relationship			.34 (.06)	1.40***
Geographical proximity			−.12 (.16)	.88
Filial obligation			.26 (.06)	1.24**
−2 Log likelihood	2865.0		2703.0	

Note: independent variables quality of relationship and filial obligation range is 1 = *low* 4 to 5 = *high*.
*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.

Our control variables show that higher relationship quality and closer proximity are positively associated with higher preferences for filial obligations and with more contact and support, although with our cross-sectional data it is not possible to determine the causal relation between these variables. Marital status and having children show few effects, but when adult children have children themselves this does lead to more contact between them and their parents.

Conclusion and discussion

This study contributes to the understanding of how cultural and structural factors are associated with ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity. First, it is clear that immigrant groups adhere much more to norms of filial responsibility than do the native Dutch, and this finding remains highly significant even after controls are added. This suggests that the respondents' views about filial obligations are *core values* rooted in the opinions and norms into which they were socialized. Contrary to more practical domains of life, such core values might not easily be adjusted in a different society. Nevertheless, consistent with previous research (Inglehart, 1997; Kalmijn, 2006) our results show that the more highly educated are less of the opinion that children have an obligation to care for their elderly parents. Therefore, as the educational level of younger immigrants rises, their opinions and perceptions might change and perhaps diversify.

Second, differences in attitudes towards filial responsibility do not directly lead to ethnic differences in other dimensions of intergenerational solidarity. This finding is consistent with the argument by Thompson and Walker (1989) that abstract beliefs about what people 'should' do are relatively inconsequential for actual behavior. Although ethnic differences in associational solidarity still show significantly higher levels of contact for immigrant groups, the differences become mainly insignificant when practical support and counsel or advice are considered.

Nevertheless, our results highlight the importance of separating men and women when examining ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity (see also Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004a). Whereas women report higher levels of contact with parents than men in all ethnic groups, providing practical support is much more likely to be given by Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese women than by Dutch and Antillean women. Combining men and women into one analysis hides the fact that there are significant ethnic differences in the female group of respondents. The overall finding that immigrant adult children provide somewhat more practical support than Dutch children is due to the fact that immigrant women provide more support to their parents than Dutch women. Men are equally (un)likely to provide support across all groups. This is an interesting finding, since especially in the Turkish and Moroccan groups women were traditionally expected to care for their parents-in-law, rather than for their own parents. Unfortunately, our data does not permit us to take into consideration support to parents-in-law, but it might be that immigrant women are supporting both their own parents and their parents-in-law after migration. This double burden was also found for Turkish women in Germany by Lorenz-Meyer and Grotheer (2000).

In addition, socio-economic resources do not seem to have a positive effect on the behavioral aspects of solidarity, as was suggested by previous research from the United States (Eggebeen, 1992; Hogan et al., 1993). Only in the case of men, higher educational levels lead to a greater likelihood of providing support. It might be that in an advanced welfare state like the Netherlands, with relatively high levels of social security, economic resources are of less importance for intergenerational support than in the United States where the state offers much less assistance.

Finally, giving counsel or advice seems to be a less common activity in immigrant groups, especially for Turks. Although we do not have data on this topic, we believe that giving advice to parents is something not easily done or accepted in all cultures alike. It would be of importance to take into account cultural differences in forms of support considered appropriate when designing questionnaires focusing on intergenerational solidarity. Nevertheless, we do find that higher educated people are more likely to provide advice. This suggests that, as the educational level of immigrants rises, giving advice to their parents will become a more common type of support.

An important issue not addressed in this study is whether ethnic differences in intergenerational solidarity will remain salient if people are longer subjected to the culture of the new society (Foner, 1997). Acculturation theories suggest that immigrants adapt more to the host society as they live longer in their new surroundings. However, family values, as part of the private domain, might be less prone to change than more public domains of adaptation such as language proficiency. On the other hand, it is known that differential rates of acculturation between first and second generation immigrants can lead to tensions between parents and children.

The causal relationship between the filial obligation norms and the actual behavior of adult children is difficult to disentangle (Gans & Silverstein, 2006). Cognitive dissonance theory (Finley, Roberts, & Banahan, 1988) suggests that filial expectations may be adjusted in an attempt to reconcile the gap between the ideal and the revealed practice. More understanding of these causal relationships requires longitudinal data that traces the ways in which filial obligations change.

Our findings advance scholarship on intergenerational solidarity in immigrant families in Europe about which little is known. In addition, our findings have implications for the ongoing discussion in Europe concerning old-age security and the wellbeing of the elderly.

Given the growing number of older people with an immigrant background in western societies, their special needs and circumstances should be given greater attention by scholars and policy makers alike. Our study shows that we cannot assume that immigrant elderly will be automatically supported by their adult children in all domains. Finally, we strongly argue that minority and immigrant families should be included in large surveys as a matter of standard practice. Their inclusion will enable better comparisons of family ideals, attitudes and practices across diverse groups and generations.

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